H.g. 29/8

THE PROOFE OF

A Good Preacher.

The right Art of Hearing.

That good Counsel, is seldom well taken.

That wilful Offenders, are as witlesse as wicked.

With

An Apologie for wholesome Truth, how distasteful soever.

By J. F.

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Good Counsel, seldome well taken:

WITH

An Apologie for wholesome Truth, be it never so untoothsome, &c.

Sect. I.

PHilosophy teaches, that admonitions and corrections are the chiefest offices of love: That it is the onely true love, which to profit and do good, feareth not to hurt and offend: That to connive at our friends faults, is to make them our own. That sharp reprehension is the healing of the soul; and that love to the soul, is the very soul of love. Whence *Euripides* exhorts

horts men to get ſuch friends, as would not ſpare to diſpleaſe them. Whence *Scipio* the Elder, when his friends for ſo doing turned his enemies, was able to ſay, *I have given my enemies as great cauſe to love me, as my friends.* And indeed he that loves not ſuch a friend, hates himſelf. And commonly, he that will not tell us of our faults, will be very ready to tell others of them: whereas one that is faithful, will ſpeak of our faults to our face, of our virtues behind our backs. But ſee farther the ſweet fruit of ſharp reprehenſion; Suppoſe one ſhould be ſtung by a Bee, (when aſleep) whereby he is delivered from a Serpent, which otherwiſe had ſtung him to death: Hath he cauſe to complain? And not to chide a friend, leſt we offend him, is to let him drown, rather than catch him by the hair. Wherefore give me ſuch a friend as *Photion*, who when a friend of his would have caſt himſelf away, ſuffered him not, ſaying; *I was made thy friend to this purpoſe.* All which is ſound Divinity, neither wants it Scripture-ſeal to confirm it. Not to admoniſh our brother, is to hate him, as the Holy Ghoſt witneſſeth, *Levit.*19.17. But to ſcorn our brother ſhould admoniſh us, is more to hate our ſelves; in that *open rebuke is better than ſecret love.* And for that *the very*

wounds

*wounds of a lover are faithful, and better than the kiſſes of an enemy, Prov.*27.5,6. Yea, experience teaches, that no friend is ſo commodious in this caſe as an enemy; becauſe he tels us of that, which otherwiſe we ſhould never be ſo happy as to hear of.

Nevertheles, reſolved ſinners ſcorn reproof: Admonition to them, is like goads to ſuch as are mad already: or like powring oyl down the chimney, which may ſet the houſe on fire, but never abate the heat; which is not for want of ignorance: for by refuſing to hear in this caſe, they become (like *Amaziah)* wilful murtherers of their own ſouls, as wiſe *Solomon* affirms, his words are, *He that refuſeth admonition is bruitiſh, and deſtroyeth his own ſoul, Prov.* 12.1. and 15.32. yea, he goes further, and ſayes, *A man that hardeneth his neck when he is reproved, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and cannot be cured, Prov.*29.1. and 1.24, 25, 26. of which you have moſt remarkable and dreadful examples, 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. 2 *Chron.*25.16,20.

Sect. 2. Nevertheleſſe, how few are there ſo wiſe, as to take admonition well? For, *Reprove a ſcorner* (that is, a fool) *and he will hate thee; reprove a wiſe man, and he will love thee, Prov* 9.8. To which we may add *Prov.* 22.3. *A wiſe man foreſeeth the evil,* (that is the

evil of Hell, ſayes *Bernard*) *and prevenieth it; but fools go on and are puniſhed.*

Now that theſe Bruits and Soul-deſtroyers, may the better be known to themſelves and others, and the greatneſſe of their folly and madneſſe, together with what a world of them there are amongſt us, (for to be wiſe, according to wiſe *Solomons* deſcription, is the portion but of a few, as daily experience witneſſeth.) I will paint them out in a ſmall table, or map; and ſo expoſe them to view.

In the firſt place you ſhall know them by this mark; A man no ſooner tels them of a fault, but it works in their brains as yeeſt in a barrel, until they have requited their Admoniſher with a miſchief; being like gunpowder, to which you no ſooner give fire, but they fly in your face. Admonition may move them to choller, never to amendment. Who when they have heard an untoothſom truth, like waters after a tempeſt, are full of working and ſwelling againſt their Admoniſher. We read that in the Law of jealouſies, if the ſuſpected wife were guilty, that drank of the bitter waters of trial, ſhe would preſently ſwell, if otherwiſe, ſhe was well enough. And it is a ſure ſigne the Horſe is gauled, that ſtirs too much when

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he is touched; ſo when they ſwell againſt their Reprehender, and hiſſe like Serpents, if we trouble their neſts never ſo little, you may juſtly conclude them guilty perſons. For no greater ſigne of innocencie, when we are accuſed, than mildneſſe, as we ſee in *Joſeph*, *Gen.* 39.17.18. And *Suſannah*, *Suſan. ver.* 42,43. And *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1.15,16. Neither is there a greater ſymptome of guiltineſſe, than our breaking into choller, when we have any thing laid to our charge: witneſſe *Cain*, *Gen.* 4.9. that Hebrew which ſtrook his fellow, *Exod.* 2.13, 14. *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 20.32,33. *Abner*, 2 *Sam.* 3.8. *Jeroboam*, 1 *Kin.* 13.4. *Ahab*, 1 *Kin.* 22.27. *Amaziah*, 2 *Chron.* 25.16. *Uzziah*, 2 *Chron.* 26.19. *Herod* the Tetrach, *Luke* 3.19,20. The men of *Nazareth*, *Luke* 4.28,29. The Phariſees, *John* 8.47,48. The High Prieſts and Scribes, *Luke* 20. 19, 20. And the like touching a mans wiſdome and humility. *Plato* being demanded, how he knew a wiſe man, anſwered, *When being rebuked he would not be angry, and being praiſed he would not be proud.* And to this accords that of the wiſe man, *Prov.* 11.2. and 19 11. But for one that is ſo wiſe, there is a thouſand of thoſe fools I am to decipher, who with *Balaam* will grutch to be hindered in their way to Hell, and fly upon thoſe that oppoſe

their perdition: even ſuch as think it better to fry everlaſtingly in a furnace of fire and brimſtone in Hell-flames, than to inherit a celeſtial and eternal Kingdome, and weight of ſuperabundant Glory in Heaven, to enjoy a Paradiſe of pleaſure, where are ſuch joyes, *as eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor can ever enter into the heart of man to conceive,* 1 *Cor.*2.9. This is moſt mens depth of brain, and thus it fares with all wilful and impenitent ſinners. But how hath the Devil bewitcht them? Is it poſſible that the reaſonable ſoul of man (not profeſſedly barbarous) ſhould be capable of ſuch a monſter? Certainly if I did not know the truth and probate of it, by occular and experimental demonſtration from day to day, I could hardly bring my underſtanding to beleeve it!

But to make this further appear, though I have ſmall hope to prevail with the parties themſelves (for they that have no reaſon, will hear none; and he that learns of none but himſelf, hath a fool for his Teacher.) Guilty ſinners will ſwell againſt their reprehender, innocent ſouls will be cheered and cleered by it, *Numb.*5.21,22. Reſolved offenders being reproved, in ſtead of penitence break into choller, fury ſparkles in thoſe eyes which ſhould guſh out with water, and

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in ſtead of embracing the counſel, will rage at the Counſellour. Croſſed wickedneſſe proves deſperate, and in ſtead of yeelding, ſeeks for revenge of its own ſins upon others uprightneſſe: whereas if anothers ſimple fidelity ſhews it ſelf in reproving the honeſt-hearted, he loves his Monitor ſo much the more, by how much the more he ſmarteth, allowing of truth as well when it hurts him, as when it helps him.

But unſound fleſh loves to be ſtroked, the leaſt roughneſſe puts it into a rage; a feſtered conſcience will not endure a drawing plaſter, a putrid and ſcabbed limb delights to be ſcratcht and rubbed, foule faces would have falſe glaſſes: *Diomedes* muſt have a crooked ſhooe for his wry foot: *Caligula* muſt be adored as a God, forſooth, though he live like a Devil, poyſoning his unckle, and deflowring all his ſiſters. Thorns muſt be touched with a gentle hand, not graſped; theſe ulcers muſt be no further ſearched into, than the dead fleſh reaches, for if you but touch them to the quick, you ſhall quickly hear of it, and be ſure to ſmart for it.

Sect. 3. But to bring this home to you of this place, with whom my buſineſſe lyes; for hitherto I have but ſpoken in the air, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, or onely paved a way to my

my intended matter, or at uttermoſt but given you a Preparative before hand, as Phyſicians do to their Patients, that their phyſick may work the more kindly, your Paſtour hath for many years preached in the Metropolitane City, where they are more civilized and better bred, without any clamour; yea, with much approbation: for they enterteined him as *Lot* did thoſe Angels, that came to fetch him out of Sodom: but you enterteine him as courſely, as the Ammonites did *Davids* meſſengers. Nor did the Devil ever ſo rage in this rude place, as he hath done ſince his preaching hath awakened your conſciences, and by the looking-glaſſe of the Law, and light of the Goſpel, ſhewen you the deformity & filthineſs of your ſouls. A notable argument that Satan fears he ſhall be routed, and his Kingdome more ſhaken in your quarters, than hath fallen out in former times, or by the preaching of any that have gone before him, for he daily rages more and more amongſt you. As for inſtance, at firſt he was oppoſed by a few ſimple Sectaries, and that was no ſmall honour to him, as *Hiram* told *Auſtin* in the like caſe. But now his preaching againſt drunkennes, deceitfulnes, ſwearing, Sabbath-breaking, ignorance, formality, and ſuch other

other common ſins, hath brought all the pariſh about his ears; not alone the wit-foundered Drunkard, but the civil Juſticiary, the formal Hypocrite, the ignorant Animal, and all ſorts of impenitent ſinners. And why? But becauſe the virtue and efficacie of Gods word, which is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword, to divide between the ſoul and ſpirit, joynts and marrow, as it is *Heb.*4.12. hath diſcovered and made manifeſt to your ſelves and others, the very ſecrets and moſt inward intents of your hearts. Inſomuch that your conſciences are forced to bear witneſs againſt your ſelves, that you are the parties to whom he ſpeaks, as if he named you, or each of you in particular, as you have an inſtance, 1 *Cor.* 14, 24, 25. *Heb.*4.12. whence your guilty conſciences ſuggeſt, that he aims at you in particular, though he names none, when indeed it is onely the prerogative and ſpirituallity of the Word above all other writings, to diſcover the hearts, and ſpeak home to the conſciences of all that hear it delivered with power and authority. As for the Meſſenger, the truth of his heart gives him boldneſs to profeſs before him who onely knows it, that he ſtrives againſt no man but his ſtrife, malignes no man but his malice, envies no

man

man but his envie, as *Hierome* ſpeaks. Yea, he could be more glad to ſee any mans (even his greateſt enemies) amendment, than his puniſhment. This (I ſay) is the genuine reaſon, why hundreds of you fret, and chafe, and fume, and ſwell, and ſtorm, and rage, and are ready to burſt again when you hear him. Your ſins and deformities are ſo diſcovered and detected, your preſumptuous confidence of being Chriſtians good enough, and of your going to Heaven ſo queſtioned, that your peace is diſturbed, and you will be revenged of ſome body.

It is obſervable, that when our Saviour ſent forth his Apoſtles to preach abroad in the world, having firſt taught them the way, his words to them were, *Behold, I ſend you forth, as ſheep amongſt wolves, Matth.* 10. 16. Are not you theſe wolves? not onely wolviſh, but meer wolves; yes, you are, and will be, until the Goſpel ſhall have wrought a change in your hearts and natures, *Hebr.* 10. 16. *Acts* 15. 9. and 20. 29. Again, *Matth.* 7. 6. he ſayes, *Caſt not your pearls before ſwine, leſt they tread them under their feet, and turning again all to rent you.* Are not you thoſe unreaſonable beaſts and ſwine? If not, who are? Yea, you are more bruitiſh than a ſwine, or any other unreaſonable creature.

For

For whereas Chriſt by his Miniſters, would reconcile you to God, as *Joab* did *Abſalom* to *David*, by the woman of Tekoah; you cry they *come to torment you before the time*, *Matth.* 8.29. Your caſe is juſt like his in the Goſpel, that called himſelf *Legion*, who having been poſſeſt with Devils a long time, was at length very loth to part with his gueſts: yea, he thought himſelf tormented, when Chriſt came to caſt out them, and ſave him, *Mark* 1.24. *Luke* 8.28.

Sect. 4. Now what courſe do you take to be revenged of him? For this makes you hate him above meaſure, miſ-conſtrue his actions and intentions, rail on him, ſlander him, curſe him, withſtand and contrary his doctrine, watch for his halting, combine together and lay plots how you may do him the moſt miſchief, which is all you are able to do: for elſe you would bring him before the Magiſtrate, impriſon, ſmite, wound, and put him to death, as the Jews ſerved Chriſt, as I could ſhew you from a world of teſtimonies and examples out of the Word. See onely *John* 16.2,33. *Matth.* 24.9. *Matth.* 10. 34,35,36. *Luke* 12.51,52,53. and 21.16,17: But our comfort is, you have not ſo much authority as malice; reſembling the Serpent *Porphyrus*, which abounds with poiſon, but

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can hurt none, for want of teeth. Though your puniſhment ſhall be never the leſſe; for good and evil thoughts, and deſires, in Gods account, are good and evil works, and ſhall ſo be judged in that Court of Juſtice where is no partiality.

But ſince you cannot do as you would, you will do what you can; as it fared with *Zoilus* that common ſlanderer, or as it does with the Devil, *Revel.* 12. 15. For if the Law binds your hands, yet you will be ſmiting with your tongues; and if the Law ſo keeps you in awe, that you dare not ſmite him on the mouth, as the High Prieſt did *Paul*, *Acts* 23.2. Yet you will do what you dare, you will ſmite him with the mouth, as *Ziba* did honeſt *Mephiboſheth*, 2 *Sam.*16.3. And the like touching his maintenance, becauſe you cannot out him of his living, you will defraud and rob him of his means and livelihood, and neither pay him a peny your ſelves, nor ſuffer others, ſo far as you can help it, which is a plot to pluck up all religion by the roots: For how ſhould our Paſtours feed our ſouls, if we feed not their bodies? How ſhould the lamp burn, if we take away the holy oyl that ſhould maintein it? and in caſe it burn not, there will be but a dark houſe. So that to expect that Miniſters

ſhould

ſhould preach without maintenance, is as if you ſhould ſhut a bird into a cage, give her no meat, and yet bid her ſing.

Never the leſſe it pleaſes you, that you can (as you think) diſpleaſe him, and withall pleaſure your ſelves in ſaving your ſilver, little dreaming what you do; for look but narrowly into it, and you ſhall ſee that this is not onely perſecution, theft, ſacriledge, murther of bodies and ſouls, of provoking God to ſend a famine of his Word, and the like: but you become by it guilty of high treaſon againſt God, in thus uſing his Ambaſſadour, and againſt Chriſt and all his members, as I have elſwhere made manifeſt. Though it is wicked enough for you to impeach his credit, aſperſe his ſpotleſſe name, and take away his reputation, that ſo none elſe may hear him, or regard what he delivers, which is a wickeder plot than your blind ſouls are able to diſcern. Beſides, *A good name* (ſayes *Salomon*) *is better than a good ointment: and to be choſen above great riches, Prov.*22.1.

Indeed his life is ſo well known, that all the harm you do him is, but as a candle to a white wall: that may much black it (among ſuch Senſualiſts as your ſelves) but cannot burn it, though that be too much, for a mans good

good name is like a milk white ball, that exceedingly gathers ſoil even with toſſing.

Nor can he expect to fare better, ſo long as he tarries with you, where Satan hath his throne, in a place that moſtly conſiſts of Swearers, Drunkards, and Drink-ſellers. He hath by his powerful preaching raiſed the Devil in many of you, but it will be hard laying him again: yea, once to expect it (when God hath given men over to their own luſts) were an effect of frenzie, not of hope. For can he with *Crabronius*, be ever pudling in a waſps neſt, and think to eſcape their ſtings? Or be ſtill blowing in the duſt, and not endanger his eyes? It is no way poſſible. For, he that toucheth pitch ſhall be defiled therewith. *He that reproveth a ſcorner, purchaſeth to himſelf ſhame: and he that rebuketh the wicked, getteth himſelf a blot*, Prov. 9.7,8. See *Jer.* 18.

Though I ſpeak not this to diſ-hearten him, whom God hath placed over you: for Gods glory we are bound to redeem with our own lives. And a conſcionable Miniſter is like *David*, who would venture upon a Bear, rather than loſe a Lamb. Or *Jacob*, who would endure heat by day, and froſt by night, rather than neglect his flocks. Or *Moſes*, who would fight with odds, rather than

than the Cattle ſhould periſh with thirſt. Onely a *Balaam* wants this mercie.

Nor can I wiſh him to ſpare you ever the more; by delivering himſelf in a gentler tone; as you, like the men of *Bengala*, would have onely words of down and honey, have him ſpeak nothing but pure roſes; preach unto you *Peace, peace*, and propheſie of wine and ſtrong drink, then ſhould he be a welcome Prophet to you: But this were to fulfill the proverb, *Like Paſtour like people*, *Hoſ.* 4.9. Yea, this were, for *the blind to lead the blind, that both might fall into the ditch together*, *Luke* 6.39. Alas, the fault lies not in the Word, nor in his delivering it, but in the wickedneſſe of your hearts that are the hearers: who like the Spider, will ſuck poiſon from the ſelf ſame flower that the Bee does honey. Nor will any truth (be it never ſo untoothſome) offend any, but ill minds; *Michah* 2.7. Yea, even the ſame words that are lanſets to a bad mans conſcience, will be as balm to penitent ſinners. The Word being like ſome mighty wind, that bears over tall Elms or Cedars, with the ſame blaſt that it raiſeth a ſtooping Reed, *Exod.* 20.21.

Sect. 5. Every good line of Gods Word, adds ſinew to the vertuous mind, and withall

heals that vice which would be ſpringing in it: The very judgements of God to a good man, are *ſweeter than the honey and the honey-comb, Pſal.*19.10. But alas, the ſame report, wherewith the ſpirit of *Rahab* melts, hardens the King of Jericho, *Joſh.*2. *Sergius Paulus* was converted, *Elymas* obdurated at the ſame Sermon, *Acts* 13. Yea, even the ſame face of the Judge, without any inward alteration, is ſeen with terrour to the guilty, with joy and confidence by the oppreſſed innocent, The ſame rod that brought plagues to the Egyptians, brings deliverance to Iſrael.

But I dare refer the caſe to thine own conſcience to determine, (if the cuſtome of ſin, and the god of this world hath not totally blinded thee) where the fault lies, and who is to be blamed in this particular? Is the Phyſician to be blamed for the pain of his Patient, or the diſeaſe? The Chirurgeon or the wound, which he endeavors by all means to cure? Yea, what is the genuine reaſon, why the worſt men and members of a Pariſh evermore regard a good Miniſter leaſt? complain of his bitterneſs, and ſeek by all means to remove him? Is it not becauſe they are feet, and legs, and thighs, and arms out of joynt, and ſo cannot endure the touch of the Chirurgeons hand, & the acrimony of his medicines.

medicines. Alas, every good Phyſician had rather cure a diſeaſe by ſleep and diet, than by *Scammony* and *Caſtorium*: but an intemperate ſick man maketh a cruel Phyſician And in caſe the diſeaſe be deſperate, he muſt uſe the extremity of phyſick. Nothing will eaſe the Pluresie, but letting of bloud: and to ſuch as are ſick of a dead Apoplexie, they are forced to give a double quantity of phyſick, or their faculties will not be awakened. Which is the very caſe of theſe deſperate ſinners, who if they wanted not brains, would in ſtead of complaining be thankful. The Phyſician and Chirurgion heals us not without pain, and yet we reward them: Yea, had any of you but a leg, or an arm putrefied and corrupt, you would even give money, and think your ſelves beholding too, to have them cut off, becauſe it is the onely way and means to preſerve the whole body. And if ſo, what love and thanks can be too much, that is expreſt to them who would (would you give them leave) pluck you out of Satans clutches, and bring you to life eternal? Nor can he ever be thankful to God, who is not thankful to the Inſtrument, or means, by whom God does, or would do him good.

Beſides, it were a breach of Juſtice, not

to proportion the rebuke to the crime: For, for a Miniſter to uſe gentle reprehenſion, in caſe of capital offences, that is in caſe of thefts, rapines, ſacriledges, adulteries, and inceſts, to ſay to his people, as *Eli* to his ſons, *Why did you ſo?* Is no other than to ſhave that head which deſerves cutting off. For as it is with ill humours in the body, that a weak doſe doth but ſtir and anger them, not purge them out; yea, if phyſick be not ſtrong enough to purge out choller, it encreaſeth choller; the humours it would have purged and expelled (if it had been ſtrong enough) it inflameth, exaſperateth and ſharpeneth. And as the Sun in the Spring-time breedeth agues, and other diſtempers, becauſe it ſtirreth humours and doth not waſte them; ſo it fareth with ſins in the ſoul. An eaſie and gentle reproof doth but encourage wickedneſs, and make it think it ſelf ſo ſlight, as that rebuke importeth; which is to patronize evil in ſtead of reproving it. And experience ſhews, that cold Preachers make bold ſinners. However, ſuch being like ill Archers, that draw not their arrows up to the head, ſeldome convert theſe ſinners.

Nevertheleſs, reſolute ſinners would have diſſolute Teachers; would have the Law according to their lives, not their lives according

cording to the Law. That pleaſeth them which is ſweet to the ſence, not that which is wholeſome to the conſcience, as the Holy Ghoſt informs us, *Iſa.*30.10. 1 *Kings* 12.8. *Mich.*2.11. Like wanton children, they care not to be mended, but to be commended: He that praiſeth them, pleaſeth them.

But wo to ſuch Preachers, as ſhall heal the hurt of theſe people with ſweet words, ſaying, *Peace, peace,* and give them comfort (as *Jezabel* did *Ahab,* 1 *Kings* 21.5,6,7.) when they rather deſerve a curſe, *Jer.*8.11. For this is no other than guilded treaſon, like that of *Hazael* to his Maſter, who told him with his mouth that he ſhould recover, when on the morrow he ſtifled him with his hand, and a wet cloth, 2 *Kings* 8. 14, 15. Whence the Holy Ghoſt brands all flattering Preachers, that ſow pillows, for *falſe Prophets, Jer.* 8. 11. And indeed it is but a Mountebank trick, to heal an ulcer, and leave in the core. A good Phyſician, either for ſoul or body, firſt tels the ſtate of the diſeaſe with its ſymptomes, and then preſcribes; and in preſcribing, firſt puls down the body with purgatives, and then raiſeth it with cordials. And take this for a rule, ſuch as fear God, & are Miniſters of his ſending, wil think it better to loſe mens favors than their ſouls,

and be ſure to diſcharge his conſcience from the burthen of any ones bloud, *Ezek.* 3. 18. and 33. 8. Yea, an ingenious Patient ſhould be ſo wiſe as to know, that the ſtomack ſhould rather be pleaſed than the pallate: and experience tels us, that thoſe things (for the moſt part) that are leaſt pleaſing, are moſt wholeſome. Rue is an herb moſt bitter to the taſte, yet in regard of the vertue which is in it, we uſually call it *Herb of grace*. And Phyſicians find, that though *Mithridate*, of all other Electuaries it be the moſt diſtaſteful, yet of all others it is the moſt wholeſome. And ſo it fares touching ſpiritual truths. Whence a good Preacher cares not ſo much to ſtroke the ear, as to ſtrike the conſcience: being like a good Phyſician, who gives ſharp medicines, and bitter potions, that he may make ſhort diſeaſes, and procure ſound health. The true method of preaching, and the likelieſt way to undeceive the deceived, and (with bleſſing from above) to pluck ſinners out of Satans ſnares is: for a Miniſter to deal with his hearers, as the Prophet did by *Hazael*, when he plainly told him the abominable wickedneſs of his heart, and what evil (even beyond beleef) he ſhould ſhortly do or execute, had he been wiſe enough to have been warned thereby. Or as *Nathan*

did

did by *David*, when he ſo cunningly made him pronounce ſentence of death againſt himſelf. Or as *Jonah* did by the *Ninevites*, when with that ſhort thundering Sermon of eight words, he converted that great City. Or as *Peter* by his Converts, when he told them they were the men, that had crucified the Lord of life. Or *John Baptiſt* by *Herod*, and all that came unto him. Or as *Chriſt* by the woman of Samaria, when he ſo repreſented the very thoughts of her heart unto her conſcience, that ſhe was forced to confeſſe, *He hath told me all things that ever I did.* Or as he did with *Saul*, when he ſpake to him from Heaven, which words made him tremble, and fall to the earth with aſtoniſhment. Which makes one of the Fathers ſay, that *The crown of Preachers is the tears of their hearers.* And Saint *Baſil*, that *Sharp reprehenſion is the healing of the ſoul.* And *Chryſoſtom* ſay to his hearers, *If I make you ſmart give me the more thanks for it.* Nay, ſays *Baſil*, *It may well be feared, that Miniſters open not the word aright, when wicked men kick not againſt it.* And *Luther* was of that judgement, that he thought if Miniſters ſhould preach the word as they ought, they ſhould ſtir up all the Furies of Hell againſt themſelves.

Sect. 6. Now what's the reaſon, why

down right truth is so unpleasing to carnal minds? when none can deny, but it is by far the more wholesome. It is this, All men love the light as it shines, but as it discovers and directs, the most of men hate it None so bad, but they can away with pleasing truths, and promises of mercie. Or let the Minister walk in generals, and labour more to fill the head with knowledge, than the heart with grace; to please the sence, than speak to the conscience, by driving an application close home to them in particular, touching some one sin of theirs (which is the soul of preaching) so long they will like him; yea, he is a fair and good Church-man, a great Scholar. But let him act the part of *Boanerges*, thunder out the judgements of God against sinners, let him do as God commands *Ezekiel* to do, *Ezek.* 4.4. Answer them according to their Idols, preach to their necessities, presse them to holy duties, reprove them for their unholy practices, make known to them what evil consciences they have; then they turn their backs upon him, and hate him to the death; as *Ahab* did *Eliah* and *Michaiah*; *Herod* and *Herodias*, *John Baptist*; the Jews, our Saviour; and the Galatians, *Paul*. See *Amos* 5. 10. yea, they will say, *Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is*

not

not meet that he ſhould live. The caſe of all incorrigible, and cauterized ſinners; as well the covetous as the riotous; the civil, ſuch as ſeek to fill their cheſts, as thoſe that are all for ſatisfying their luſts, For let a Miniſter but rowze and raiſe them out of their ſecurity, ſaying, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ſtand up from the dead*, all are inſtantly about his ears. Then the wit-foundered Drunkard cries out, ſaying, *He ſubverts the ſtate of the world, and troubles our City*; then the covetous Oppreſſour is ready to tell the Prophet (as the Sodomites *Lot*) *Away hence, he is come alone as a ſtranger, and ſhall he judge and rule?* then the whole Rabble *(furiouſly raging together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Anointed)* conclude peremptorily, that a peece of a pulpit, & half a Benefice, is too much for ſuch an unquiet ſpirit, ſuch a Fire-flinger. As let *Paul* but touch *Demetrius* his Copy-hold, preach down his profit, he and all of like occupation will rore out of meaſure, *Acts* 19. 28. Wherein they ſhew as great policie, as did the Sodomites, who made haſte to turn out *Lot* and his family, that fire and brimſtone might make haſte to deſtroy them.

A guilty conſcience loves application as dearly as a dog loves a cudgel. Sore eyes cannot endure the light of the Sun, nor

Bankrupts

Bankrupts the ſight of their counting-books, nor deformed faces of the true glaſs. A man were as good take an Elephant by the tooth, or ſeek to rob a Bear of her whelps, as go about to make them better. For let a Miniſter charge them from God, like ruſty or ill-wrought peeces, they will recoyl in his face; and like Serpents, not onely be deaf to his charming, but turn their tails to ſting him. Wherein they reſemble the mad man, that wounded his Phyſician, while he was adminiſtring phyſick to him for his recovery. They more ſeek for a rag to cover their ſins, than for a plaſter to heal them: as it fared with *David*, while he ſlept in that foul ſin of adultery, 2 *Sam.* 11.5,6, *&c.*

Now if they are ſo ſtartled and terrified at the Miniſters telling them of one or a few ſins, what will they do when Satan, and the Searcher of hearts, ſhall lay open all the ſins that ever they have committed, & ſpread them before them? If it be ſo dreadful to hear of what they ſhall ſuffer, if they repent not, how terrible will it be to feel it? The Law waſp-like ſtings ſhrewdly, but Satan that Hornet will ſting worſe a great deal. But if men will be warned by the former, they may prevent the latter: only theſe want that we commonly call *reaſon*; therefore, like

like children and cowards, they rather ſhut their eyes, and chuſe to feel the blow, than to ſee and endeavour to avoid it. Owoful wretches! that had rather be everlaſtingly damned for their ſins hereafter, than endure to hear of them now, to their eternal comfort. But I hope better things of ſome amongſt ſo great a number.

Gods truth, if you mark it, would cry down mens ſins, as preaching would have done *Demetrius* his trade: and therefore no marvel, if the Tradeſ-men of iniquity are up in arms againſt the Goſpel, as *Demetrius* was againſt *Paul*. And did not the Goſpel croſſe their ſins, they would not croſſe the Goſpel: but the waves do not beat or rore any where ſo much, as at the bank that reſtrains them.

The Phariſees could not endure *Jeſus*, becauſe he came to break their cuſtomes, *Luke* 6.2. The Maſters of the *Pythoneſſe*, *Acts* 16. 21. objected this againſt *Paul* and *Silas*, that they did teach contrary to their cuſtomes. For this cauſe was that uprore at Epheſus, *Acts* 19. 26. to 31. *Paul* had never become their enemy, but for telling them the truth, & dealing ſo plainly and roundly with them. And why did more than forty of the Jews bind themſelves with a curſe, neither to eat nor drink till they had killed him? *Acts* 23.

not

not for the evils they found in him, but for the vices he reproved in them. By all which it appears, that obſtinate ſinners are as witleſſe as wicked: and that they would, if they durſt, deal with their faithful Paſtours, as the Jews did by *Stephen*, who in their blind zeal were ſo furious and mercileſs, that they put him to death, for ſhewing them the way to eternal life, and ſtoned him for a Blaſphemer againſt God and his Law, who *was a man full of faith, and power, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, *Acts* 7.55, *&c.* It hath ever been the manner of wickedneſs, to be head-ſtrong in the purſuit of its own courſes, impatient of oppoſition, cruel in revenge of the oppoſers. The great ſpite and ſpleen therefore, that men bear to the Word, muſt be wreaked upon the Miniſter, he muſt be hated, outed, and perſecuted: yea, if they durſt, they would ſtone him to death, as the Jews did *Stephen*: for as their hearts braſt for anger, as they gnaſhed at him with their teeth when they heard him, *Acts* 7.54. ſo fares it with theſe touching their Miniſter. But in the meantime, what horrible, what helliſh ingratitude is this, if it be looked upon with an impartial eye? Are not theſe the very worſt of monſters? O you ſottiſh Senſualiſts, what can you alledge for your ſelves, or againſt your Miniſter?

ſter? Is he any other to you, than thoſe three Meſſengers were to *Lot?* that came to fetch him out of Sodome, that he might not feel the fire and brimſtone which followed, *Gen.* 19. Or than the Angel was to *Peter*, that opened the iron-gates, looſed his bands, brought him out of priſon, and delivered him from the thraldome of his enemies? You ſhew juſt as much reaſon in it, as if thoſe blind, deaf, diſeaſed, diſtracted, poſſeſſed, or dead perſons ſpoken of in the Goſpel, ſhould have railed upon our Saviour for offering to cure, reſtore, diſpoſſeſſe, recover and raiſe them again. And are like thoſe wicked, witleſs, and ingrateful Jews, *Judg.* 15. who when God, in great love, ſent *Samſon* to deliver them from the ſlaviſh thraldome of their enemies; they in requital bind him, (in whom all their hope of deliverance lay) and deliver him up to thoſe enemies that kept them under, to the end they might ſlay him, and ſtill make ſlaves of them. Here is your caſe right: Are you not aſhamed to be ſuch Sots? Were there ever ſuch fools, or frenzie men did commit a greater folly? For ſhame think of it before it prove too late, before you have ſinned away all hope of mercie: In the mean time, as our Saviour ſaid of his murtherers, *Father, forgive*

give them, for they know not what they do: ſo may your Miniſter ſay, adding thereto that prayer of *Stephen* when they ſtoned him: *Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge, Acts* 7.60.

Sect. 7. But that I may, if it be poſſible, fetch tears from your eyes, and bloud from your adamantine hearts, I will yet acquaint you with that which is worſe, and more conſiderable than all, I pray mind it: All the indignities and wrongs that are done to *Chriſts* Miniſters and Ambaſſadours, redound to him; and he that traduceth, or any way wrongs a Miniſter, for the diſcharge of his place, his envie ſtrikes at the image of God in him, and he ſo takes it, as a world of places ſhew. *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me,* 1 *Sam.* 17.45. *Iſa.* 37.23. *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? Acts* 9.4. *Revel.* 16.9, 11. *Pſal.* 89.23. To ſpurn at the Meſſenger, is to ſtrike at the image of God, whoſe meſſage it is. What ſaith *Paul,* 1 *Cor.* 7.10 *I have not ſpoken, but the Lord:* and therefore as the Lord ſaid unto *Saul, Acts* 9.4. that he perſecuted him (though in Heaven) ſo they who reſiſt any truth delivered out of the Word, do reſiſt God himſelf, and not his Meſſenger. But ſee further what you do, by what your fellow-perſecutours have done before you. With ſuch impatience does a gauled heart re-

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ceive admonition, that when God himſelf came to reprove *Cain* for killing his brother *Abel*; he had no ſooner ſpake theſe words, *Where is Abel thy brother?* but he returns to God himſelf this churliſh anſwer, *Am I my brothers keeper? Gen.4.9.* Again, the Scribes, Phariſees and Elders, were filled full of madneſs againſt our Saviour, and communed one with another, what they might do to Jeſus, and how they might deſtroy him, (the which you would alſo do, if he were your Miniſter, & now upon earth) for being ſo bitter, *Luke 6.11.* (For if you cannot away with the light of a candle, you would much leſſe endure to look upon the glorious Sun.) Now if God himſelf was ſo ſerved, if Chriſts own doctrine could not eſcape perſecution, no marvel if his Meſſengers cannot. Here then is ſome comfort for your Miniſter, *Honey out of a Lion.* Nor is it his ſhame to ſuffer what Chriſt ſuffered, nor your honour to do as *Cain*, *Judas*, and the reſt did, as *Cyprian* ſpeaks.

But ſecondly, take notice what our Saviours counſel is to his Miniſters, when his holy precepts and prohibitions, do either harden men as the Sun hardens clay, and cold water hot iron: or elſe inrage them, as a furious maſtiffe-dog, is the madder for his chain.

chain. What his counſel & method is, may be ſeen both by teſtimonies and examples not a few. As, *Caſt not your pearls before ſwine*, Mat. 7.6. *Into whatſoever citie you ſhall enter, if they will not receive you, go your wayes out into the ſtreets of the ſame, and ſay, Even the very duſt which cleaveth on us of your citie, we wipe off againſt you, for a witneſſe unto you. Notwithſtanding know this, that it ſhall be eaſier for Sodome and Gomorrah at the day of judgement than for you*, Luke 10.10,11,12. *Thoſe mine enemies which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me*, Luke 19.27.

And that this is an evident ſigne of one that ſhall eternally periſh, is plain, *Pro* 29.1. read the words and tremble, *A man that hardeneth his neck being often reproved, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.* See more *Prov.* 1.24,25,26, to 33. Whence it is the Prophet tels *Amaziah, I know that God hath determined to deſtroy thee, becauſe thou haſt done this, and haſt not obeyed my counſel*, 2 Chron. 25. 16,20. And that the Holy Ghoſt, ſpeaking of *Eli's* ſons, ſaith, that *They would not hearken unto, nor obey the voice of their Father; becauſe the Lord was determined to deſtroy them*, 1 *Sam.* 2.25. Yea, it is an obſervation of *Livie*, that when the deſtruction of a perſon, or a Na-

tion

tion is deſtined: then the wholeſome warnings both of God and man, are ſet at nought. And in reaſon, that ſin is paſt cure, that ſtrives againſt the cure. Herbs that are worſe for watering, Trees that are leſſe fruitful for dunging and pruning, are to be rooted out, or hewen down. Even ſalvation it ſelf will not ſave thoſe, that ſpill the potion, and fling away the plaſter. When men are the worſe for Gods endeavour to better them; the beſt and onely way is, to leave them to their Judge. Thoſe Beaſts we cannot maſter, we muſt give up. If Babylon will not be cured, ſhe muſt be left to her ſelf, given up to deſtruction without further warning. *My people would not hear my voice* (ſaith God) *and Iſrael would none of me*, *Pſal.* 81. and what follows? *So I gave them up to the hardneſſe of their hearts, and they walkt in their own counſels*, verſ. 11, 12. All further patience would prove fruitleſſe: ſo he layeth by his rod to take up his ſword; as God hath Meſſengers of wrath for them that deſpiſe the Meſſengers of his love.

Sect. 8. Now to end with a word of exhortation, to as many of you as have heard what hath hitherto been delivered, (from one that is no party, and ſo leſſe ſubject to be partial) and that are not yet given over.

In the firſt place, be not any longer offen-

ded with your Paſtour; for he is appointed a Watch-man over your ſouls, and doth but diſcharge his office that God hath placed him in, *Ezek.*3 17. and he ſhould be guilty of high treaſon againſt Chriſt, and the ſouls committed to his care, if he ſhould do leſſe. As the Centinel or Captain, that doth not what he can to maintain the wals, doth what he can to betray the City. The word is no other than Chriſts, though delivered by a weak Inſtrument. Who ever be the Crier, the proclamation is the King of Heavens. (While it goes for mans, it is no marvel if it lye open to deſpite.) So that in hating your Miniſter, and complaining of his bitterneſs, you do as wiſely and juſtly, as if the people ſhould impute the cauſe of the war to the Herald, or accuſe the Trumpet for all that their rebellion hath brought upon them. Yea, conſider who is the Authour of the Word, what the cauſe and ends of the Miniſters delivering it; and that there is nothing can cure your grief, but the ſame Word that cauſed it: and then thou wilt receive him as an Angel of God, yea, even as Chriſt Jeſus; as the primitive Chriſtians did the Apoſtles, *Gal.*4.14. who *acknowledged to owe, even themſelves, to their ſpiritual Paſtours, Philem.* 19. And *would, if it had been poſſible, have plucke*

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*out their own eyes, and have given the ſame unto them, Gal.*4.14,15. and 6.6.

You have heard ſufficiently, that this is the true method of preaching, though it be little uſed; becauſe diſcretion (with many) eats up well nigh all true devotion. Their diſcretion and moderate ſtayedneſs, much abates of their zeal, honeſty and goodneſs.

Nor can there be a better argument to prove, that a Miniſter ſtudies more to profit than to pleaſe men with his wholeſome counſel; than when he will not let them ſleep and ſnort in their ſins, but cry aloud againſt their abominations.

I grant Corraſives are not to be uſed in all caſes, Lenatives and Cordials are of no leſſe uſe to weak conſtitutions. Whence the care of every wiſe and able Miniſter, that hath skill to divide the word of God aright, muſt be and is, to give to each man his due portion; comfort to whom comfort belongs, terrour to whom terrour is due: obſerving the ſame rule that St. *Paul* did, who meeting with an *Elymas*, one that reſiſted the truth, and laboured to keep others from it, entreats him not with fair and ſweet words, as he did *Agrippa*, who was hopefully coming on to embrace the truth. Wherefore the ſame Apoſtle ſayes to the one, *O full of all*

ſubtilty and all miſchief, thou child of the Devil, and enemy of all righteouſneſſe, Acts 13. 10. But when he ſpeaks to the other, it is in a more mild, gentle, and winning tone. Or as our Saviour himſelf uſed, (that Lamb of God, *who would not break the bruized reed, nor quench the ſmoking flax.*) As how doth he multiply wo upon wo, and threaten double damnation, when he was to deal with hard-hearted Hypocrites, Oppoſers of the Goſpel, thoſe Scribes and Phariſees, *Matth.* 23. And indeed, the beſt muſick is made by a judicial correſpondence of ſharp and flat. Let all merciful & meal-mouthed Preachers, ſuch as flatter ſin and flout holineſs, ſuch whoſe ſcope of their preaching is but to feed the people with hopes, though they give them no grounds for it: that Heaven ſhall meet them at their laſt hour, be their condition never ſo wretched; which is the reaſon that moſt men walk in the broad way, and yet every man thinks to enter in at the ſtraight gate. Let theſe, I ſay, take notice of this. As alſo ſcorners of their teachers & Inſtructors, and more of their godly inſtruction: then will they love where and what they now hate, and hate where and what they now love. But you have no cauſe to complain of either extream; for in the Sermons, againſt

which

which you except, there is matter of inſtruction, of reprehenſion, of conſolation, of exhortation; for the ignorant, for the ſinfull, for the faithfull, for the deſpairing ſoul and drooping ſpirit: not Goſpel without Law, nor Law without Goſpel: but a ſweet compoſition of ſeverity and mercie, wherein Law and Goſpel meet, as *Moſes* and *Chriſt* met upon the Mount: the one to direct your obedience, the other to anſwer for your diſobedience, if you will but repent and turn unto God, with ſuch Chriſtian moderation, as may argue zeal without malice, and deſire to win ſouls, no will to gaul them. For as *Sauls* ſervants did not onely tell him that he had an evil ſpirit, but withall told him a remedy, and helpt him to the party that gave him eaſe, 1 *Sam.*16.16,18. So your Paſtour, with a diſcovery of your ſins, ſhews you a means of cure and recovery for your ſouls. Yea, do but ſubmit, and the very ſame Word (like the ſword of *Achilles*) will heal again, whom it hath wounded. Whereas if you forthwith flye from your Admoniſher, it is as if one that is launſed ſhould flye from his Chirurgian, before his wound can be bound up.

Sect. 9. Again, ſlight not him whom God hath placed over you, leſt hereafter,

when you lye gaſping on your death-beds, and come to a ſight and ſence of your ſad condition you wiſh; Oh that I had now but the opportunity, to converſe with ſuch a Miniſter; as *Saul* ſlighted *Samuel* while he lived, but would fain have heard and converſed with him, when he was dead. A caſe which often fals out, for when godleſs perſons are in any diſtreſs, they ſtill pray the people of God to pray for them: and commonly thoſe too, whom they have moſt ſlighted, hated, and abuſed. For the Oppreſſour is in no mans mercie, but his whom he hath trampled upon; and injuries done us on earth, give us power in Heaven. Whereupon *Jeroboams* hand being dried up, for ſtretching it out againſt the Prophet, he ſueth to the man of God, ſaying, *I beſeech thee pray unto the Lord thy God, and make interceſſion for me, that my hand may be reſtored unto me, and the man of God beſought the Lord, and the Kings hand was reſtored*, 1 *Kings* 13.4,6. And thus it fared between the Iſraelites and *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 12.19. between *Miriam* and *Moſes*, *Numb.* 12.13. Thus when the Lords wroth was kindled againſt *Eliphaz* and his two friends, nothing would appeaſe the ſame, but the prayer of *Job* whom they had ſo contemned, *Job* 42.7,8. Thus *Simon* the

Sorcerer

Sorcerer prayes *Peter* to pray for him, *Acts* 8.24. Yea, of whom did *Dives*, being tormented in Hell flames, expect and ſeek for eaſe, but from *Lazarus* whom lately before he had deſpiſed, *Luke* 16. 24. For though the wicked ſcorn and deſpiſe the godly in their proſperity, yet in their diſtreſs they onely are ſet by for advice, and to pray unto God for them, who are more ready to ſollicite God for their mortalleſt enemies and perſecutours, than they to deſire it, be it at the time when they wrong them moſt, witneſs *Stephen* when they ſtoned him, *Act.* 7.60. And our Saviour Chriſt when they crucified him, *Luke* 23. 34. Yea, they account it a ſin, to ceaſe praying for their worſt enemies, 1 *Sam.* 12.23. To all which I might add, how ſuch as have wronged and perſecuted the ſervants of God, are not ſeldome forced to confeſs their own folly, wickedneſs, and unthankfulneſs; the Godlies ſuperlative goodneſs, &c. As *Laban* did to *Jacob*, *Geneſ.* 30.27. and *Pharaoh* to *Moſes*, *Exod.* 9.27,28. and again *chap.* 10.16,17. and *Saul* to *David*, ſaying, *I have ſinned, I have done fooliſhly, and have erred exceedingly: thou art more righteous than I, for thou haſt rendered me good, and I have rendered thee evil, &c.* 1 *Sam.* 24.18. & 26.21.

Rare acknowledgements from Heathen and Chriſtian Kings to their own Subjects. Yet God will have it ſo, and conſcience will compell them to do ſo; though perhaps afterwards, when the rod is off their backs, they are apt to harden again, and return to their old byaſs, as did the ſame *Pharaoh* and *Saul*. For no longer than they ſmart, no longer can they ſee: and unleſs affliction opens their eyes, there is no perſwading them, but the righteous man is worſe than his neighbour: yea, none ſo vile, as *Haman* thought and reported of *Mordecai* and the Jews, and *Ahab* of *Elijah*, and *Saul* of *David*.

And this I can aſſure you beyond all exceptions, that if ever your eyes be opened, before you drop into Hell, when the maſk of prejudice is taken from before your eyes, you will be cleer of another mind to what you are: you will love that down right preaching which now you hate, and hate thoſe clawing and Rhetorical diſcourſes, that now you ſo much adore and admire.

Sect. 10. Wherefore, *receive with meekneſs the ingroffed Word, which is able to ſave your ſouls, Jam.* 1.21. Entertain it with an honeſt and good heart, and in ſo doing, you ſhall entertain both God and Chriſt with it, as our Saviour

Saviour himſelf plainly tels you, *Joh.* 13. 20. See alſo *Chron.* 34. 27, 28. Yea, hear the Word indifferently and impartially, and the rather from ſuch as thou haſt hated for their bitterneſs; perhaps God will convert and ſave thee by no other means or Miniſter, than ſuch as he hath placed thee under. *Saul*, if you obſerve it, when he was poſſeſt with an evil ſpirit, (as all are that perſecute their faithful Paſtours) all his ſpite was at *David*, from whom he received more benefit than from any one man in his Kingdome beſides: yet by Gods ſpecial appointment, none could give him eaſe but *David*. Deſpiſe not the meaneſt of Chriſts Meſſengers, that delivers his Word purely, aims at his glory and the good of ſouls. As what ſayes *Luther*, If God ſpeaks to thee as he did unto *Balaam* by an Aſſe, thou muſt have ſo much wiſdome and humility, as to hear him: Gods word is the Sword of the Spirit, that killeth our corruptions, and that unreſiſtable Cannon-ſhot, which beateth & battereth down all the ſtrong holds of ſin & Satan. But above all reſiſt it not, kick not againſt it, mock not at Gods Word or Meſſengers. O do not ſport away your ſouls into thoſe pains, which are eaſeleſs, endleſs, and remedileſs.

Do

Do you beleeve there is a God? Are you willing to be ſaved? If you are, *Break off your ſins by repentance, Dan.*4.27. *Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well, Iſa.*1.16,17. Seriouſly grieve & bewail for the millions of times that you have provoked God, and never more commit the like impiety: yea, as you tender the everlaſting happineſs and welfare of your almoſt loſt and drowned ſouls; ſet upon the work preſently, before the draw-bridge be taken up. Provide with *Joſeph* for the dearth to come, & with *Noah* in the dayes of your health, build the Ark of a good conſcience, againſt the flouds of ſickneſs: yea, do it while the yearning bowels, and compaſſionate arms of Jeſus Chriſt lye open to receive you, abjure and utterly renounce all wilful and affected evil, leſt when it is too late, it vex every vein of your hearts, that you had no more care of your ſouls.

Again, if God by his Spirit ſhall work this upon your conſciences, (as you will have cauſe to bleſſe his name, that ever you met with ſuch a ſtop, ſo) reſemble not the ruſtick Sailour, who when he is in danger of ſhipwrack, will promiſe to change his life; but when the ſtorm is overpaſt, he returns to his former vomit, making no conſcience

nor.

nor account of his vows and proteſtations. But remember that perſeverance is the crown of graces, and Heaven the crown of perſeverance. If you are convinced, and reſolve upon a new courſe, let you reſolutions be peremptory and conſtant, and take heed you harden not again as *Pharaoh*, the young man in rhe Goſpel, *Pilate* and *Judas* did: reſemble not the iron, which is no longer ſoft than it is in the fire, leſt your latter end prove worſe than your beginning, *Matth.* 12. 43,45. As it fared with *Julian* the Apoſtate, and *Judas* the Traytour; for millions are now in Hell, who thought they would repent hereafter.

God will not give his heavenly and ſpiritual graces at the hour of death, to thoſe who have contemned them all their life. If in any reaſonable time we pray, he will hear us; if we repent, he will pardon us; if we amend our lives, he will ſave us: But for want of this timely conſideration, *Dives* prayed, but was not heard; *Eſau* wept, but was not pitied; the fooliſh Virgins knockt, but were denied. And ſo it fares with all ſuch fools, they died as they have lived, and commonly go from deſpair unto deſtruction.

If

If you would prevent the like, lay not hold upon mercy, until you be throughly humbled. The onely way to become good, is firſt to beleeve that you are evil. God does not pour the oyl of grace, but into a broken and contrite heart. Would you truly know how evil and miſerable you are by nature, and be very ſenſible how evil & wicked your hearts are, ſeriouſly conſider theſe three particulars: 1 The corruption of your nature by reaſon of original ſin; 2 Your manifold breaches of Gods righteous Law by actual ſin; 3 The guilt and puniſhment due to you for both. This being done, you will ſee and find your neceſſity of a Redeemer, who came to ſave none but the weary and heavie laden ſinners, even *the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael, Matth.* 15.24. and 11.28. And indeed the ſence of our wretchedneſs, and the valuation of our ſpiritual helps, are the beſt trial of our Regeneration.

All which, if you would obtain, omit not to pray for the divine aſſiſtance of Gods Spirit. For of our ſelves we cannot think a good thought, 2 *Cor.*3.5. *John* 15.4,5. Swift we are to all evil, but to any good immoveable. Wherefore beg of God, that he will give you a new heart, and when the heart,

heart is changed, all the members will follow after it, as ſervants after their Lord. Onely let me add, be ſure you wholly and onely reſt on your Saviour Jeſus Chriſt for ſalvation, abhorring to attribute or aſcribe ought to doing. To conclude, if you receive any power againſt your corruptions, forget not to be thankful; & when God hath the fruit of his mercies, he will not ſpare to ſow much, where he reaps much. This do, and my ſoul for yours, God by his grace, will more than ſupply what is wanting; (as may be ſeen in his entertainment of the prodigal Son) and thou ſhalt be for ever happy, *Luke* 15. 20. which is the prayer, and hope, and ſhould be the joy of

Your impartial Monitor,

J. F.

FINIS.